

# Personal Narratives, Plurilingual Identity, and Language Acquisition: A comprehensive literature review

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Project presentation for Rendez-Vous PerformA, AQPC June  
11, 2021

This PerformA supported project is the preliminary research – called candidacy papers – for my doctoral program at McGill



Candidacy Papers involve in-depth research into two research topics:

Theoretical: Understandings  
of Translingual Creative  
Writing

Methodological:  
Understandings of  
Practitioner Research

# Nature of the Project (Bourse d'innovation PerformA)

# Goals of the Project



**Theoretical understanding:** The main goal of my work is to explore previous research about student-centred creative writing strategies, in addition to the standard grammar-focussed pedagogy, to promote post-secondary ESL learners' translingual identities and literacies.



**Methodological strategies:** The secondary goal is to identify research methodologies suited to teacher-researchers.

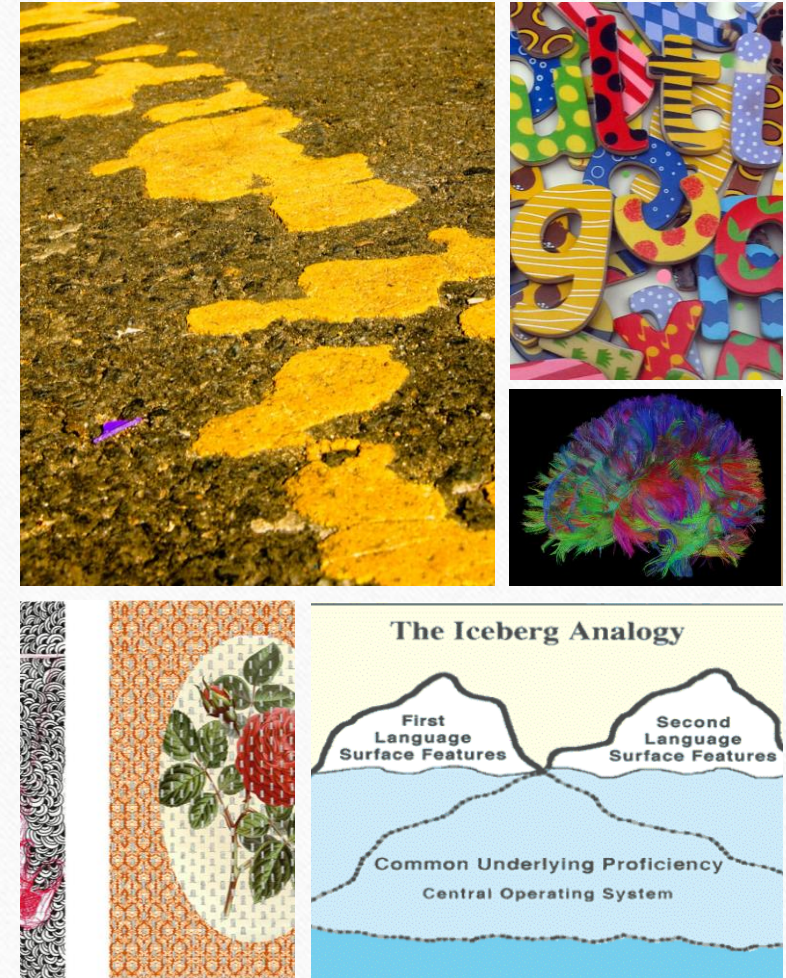


This work will prepare me to conduct my doctoral study.



# Theoretical Understanding: Translanguaging

- Shift from monolingual → bilingual → **translingual** understandings of language learning and language use
- *CUP* (Cummins, 1980) to *Translanguaging* (Garcia & Li Wei, 2014) and *translanguaging pedagogy*
- Why is it important?
  - Validate “non-standard” language use → begin to combat linguistic prejudice in school and workplace
    - Connect to *Theory of Raciolinguistics* (Rosa & Flores, 2017)
    - acknowledge oppressive nature of enforcing “standard forms” of English; emphasis on empowering multilingual students, who are also often racialized
  - Strengthen language skills in ALL named languages
    - Preserve minoritized languages and cultures
    - Strengthen skills in dominant languages – access (Janks, 2000)





# Theoretical Understanding: Creative writing in an additional language

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- As a tool for developing *voice* (Canagarajah, 2015) and *meaningful literacy* (Hanauer, 2011)
  - *voice* as an indicator of engagement in the learning process as well as ownership over the new language
  - *Meaningful literacy*: emphasis on emotion and engagement in writing and language learning to support the development of a multilingual voice/identity (Passi, 2018)
- Facilitates the creation of a translanguaging space
  - *Thirdspace* (Soja, 1996)
  - strengthen student connection to cultures and identities through a valorization of the deployment of varied semiotic repertoires in an institutional space
  - Space to subvert norms

# Methodological Strategies: Teachers as Intellectuals

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- Bartlett & Burton (2006) point out that while practitioner research functions often mainly as a form of professional development, to help teachers reflect on their practice, they do argue that practitioner research “may be legitimately described as research” (p. 395).
- Exploring **practitioner research** will be valuable, as it may enable me to evaluate a pedagogical intervention (the personal narrative writing project). Some examples to begin looking at include Allwright (2003); Aubusson & Gregson (2008); Benson (2013); Wallace (2003); and Motha (2014).



# Methodological Strategies: Narrative as Knowledge

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- **Narrative inquiry** draws on ethnographic techniques of participant-observation, which enable researchers to situate themselves as actors in the research and harness researcher relationships with participants to create new knowledge through narrative (Freeman, 2015).
- This methodology has some similarities to practitioner research in that it allows teacher-researchers a) to be reflexive, which is important given the power dynamics at play in a classroom; and b) to integrate the collaborative nature of teaching into research design.
- Narrative inquiry has a strong tradition of rich data analysis.
- Narrative thematic analysis can be used to explore data sets, especially written or spoken stories, for patterns and categories related to research questions (Riessman, 2008).
- Data sets for future research may include a blend of field notes, student writing samples, and student reflections on their own writing. Narrative analysis offers powerful tools for understanding such story-based data as well as collecting it.

# Outputs

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- Scholarly presentation of candidacy papers
- Two 20-30 page papers, one for each topic (theoretical, methodological)
- Brief summary/report for the PerformA community
- Date for completion: August, 2022



Thank you!  
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# Resources for Teaching Translingual & Creative Writing

- *Write Beside Them: Risk, Voice and Clarity in High School Writing* by Penny Kittle
  - Excellent description of how to craft a personal narrative (or other) writing units with tips on how to create a classroom of writers
- *Living Voices: Multicultural Poetry in the Middle School Classroom* by Jaime R. Wood
  - Beautiful poetry paired with mini-lessons! Easy to use, and honestly works very well with cégep students, too!
- *Race, Empire, and English Language Teaching: Creating Responsible and Ethical Anti-Racist Practice* by Suhanthie Motha
  - Reflections on teaching English in our modern world
- *Let's not forget that translanguaging is a political act* blog post by Nelson Flores
  - Explanation of translanguaging and why it is important
- *Introduction to Translingual Writing* by OWL Purdue
  - Ideas for using translanguaging in your own classroom, as well as suggested readings 😊



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